

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 INRE-00 AID-20 EB-11 FSI-01 PM-09 INR-10 IO-12

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 RSR-01 DPW-01 PRS-01

OMB-01 SS-15 ADP-00 /114 W
----- 026912

P R 101015 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9926

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USDEL JGC PARIS

CIA

DIA

JCS

JUSMAAG BANGKOK

WHITE HOUSE

USAJFKCMA

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL CAN THO

CO 7 TH PSYOPS GP OKINAWA

CINCPAC

CINCPACFLT

CINCPACAF

CINCUSARPAC

USARV- AVHGB- O

ZEN DEPCHIEF JUSMAAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 SAIGON 6048

E. O. 11652 GDS

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TAGS PINT PFOR ECONCWS
SUDTECT EMBASSY SAIGON'S MISSION WEEKLY APRIL 4-10, 1973

BANGKOK ALSO PASS OSA; DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR AID/ W
CINCPAC FOR POLAD AND DOD PRO USAJFKCMA ATT: ATCS- WL- DSA

THIS WEEK IN BRIEF

- REVIEW OF CEASEFIRE'S TENTH WEEKEND
- THREE NEW PROV ECE CHIEFS NAMED
- OPPOSITION TRIES TO SPEAK ITS MIND
- ETHNIC CAMBODIAN MONK ASSASSINATED
- MEDIA REVIEW
- NO PROGRESS IN GVN- PRG BILATERALS
- FRANCE, GVN TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS
- FIRST ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TO GVN NAMED
- TRAVELS OF DRV/ PRG PERSONALITIES
- PRINCE SIHANOUK'S INDOCHINA JOURNEY
- PRICE INDEX CONTINUES DOWNWARD TREND

I. INTERNAL

A. TENTH WEEK OF THE CEASEFIRE

THE TENTH WEEK OF THE CEASEFIRE WAS MARKED BY RISING LEVELS OF VIOLENCE AND CONTINUING DETERIORATION IN ICCS EFFECTIVENESS. MR-1 WAS RELATIVELY QUIET BUT THE CONTINUING COMMUNIST BUILD UP NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS CARRIED OMINOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE. MR-2 WAS ALSO RELATIVELY QUIET BUT A TREND FROM ABFS TO TENACIOUS GROUND ATTACKS WAS EVIDENT. IN MR-3, TONG LE CHAN CONTINUED UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE AND THE ICCS AND TPJMC WERE INEFFECTIVE IN DEALING WITH THE SITUATION. THE GVN HAS PROTESTED PRG TONG LE CHAN VIOLATIONS IN A LETTER TO THE AW SIGNATORIES OF THE " FINAL ACT". MR-4 SAW SOME OF THE BLOODIEST FIGHTING SINCE THE CEASEFIRE WITH ACTION
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HEAVIEST IN CHUONG THIEN, DINH TUONG AND KIEN PHONG, WHERE THE

BATTLE FOR HONG NGU CONTINUED.

ICCS CANDEL AND INDODEL WITHDREW FROM HONG NGU UNDER VC/ NVA SHELLING AND GROUND PROBE PRESSURE. THE DOWNING OF AN ICCS CHOPPER BY THE VC/ NVA NEAR LAO BAO ON APRIL 7 WITH THE LOSS OF NINE LIVES WAS THE MOST VIVID EXAMPLE SO FAR OF VC/ NVA DISREGARD FOR ICCS OPINION. A VNAF CHOPPER ACCOMPANYING AN ICCS CHOPPER WAS DOWNED NEAR VI THANH ON APRIL 9 ALTHOUGH NO CASUALTIES WERE REPORTED. HUNGDSK/ POLDEL OBSTRUCTIONISM REMAINED UNCHANGED.

THE TPJMC MADE NO PROGRESS, REMAINING STALLED ON THE TONG LE CHAN ISSUE, ALTHOUGH THE TWO SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES CONTINUE TO MEET. NO PREGRESS WAS MADE IN PARIS BILATERAL TALKS AS THE PRG REFUSED A GVN OFFER OF SECRET TALKS.

B. THREE NEW PROVINCE CHIEFS NAMED

THREE NEW PROVINCE CHIEFS HAVE BEEN NAMED TO REPLACE THOSE REMOVED MARCH 27 ON CORRUPTION CHARGES (APRIL 3 MISSION WEEKLY). THE NEW PROVINCE CHIEFS ARE:

PHUOC TUY: LTC HUYNH BUU SON (FORMER BA XUYEN DEPUTY SECTOR CHIEF)

PHU BON: LTC LO VAN BAO (FORMER DAK TO DISTRICT CHIEF- IN- EXILE)

PHU YEN: LTC BUI XUAN HAI 74*94.34 :#83*, HOA VANG DISTRICT, QUANG NAM PROVINCE).

MEANWHILE, MG NGUYEN VAN HIEU, VICE PRESIDENTIAL SPECIAL ASSISTANT IN CHARGE OF CORRUPTION INVESTIGJ99, , HAS BEEN CONDUCTING FIELD INVESTIGATIONS OF CHARGES AGAINST THE CHIEFS REMOVED IN PHU YEN AND PHU BON AND WILL SHORTLY BEGIN WORK IN PHUOC TUY.

C. THE OPPOSITION TRIES TO SPEAK ITS MIND

OPPOSITION LEADERS WERE FAIRLY ACTIVE LAST WEEK IN EXPRESSING OPINIONS AGAINST PRESIDENT THIEU, BUT THEIR PLEAS WERE LARGELY UNHEARD IN THE PRESENT ATMOSPHERE OF PUBLIC LETHARGY AND PRESS CENSORSHIP. ON APRIL 4 A TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT NIXON AND THE U. S. CONGRESS SIGNED BY OPPOSITION DEPUTIES, SENATORS, AND " INTELLECTUALS" WAS DELIVERED TO THE EMBASSY. IT ASKED THE U. S. TO ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS IN SOUTH VIETNAM UNDER ARTICLE 11 OF THE JAN 27 AGREEMENT. (SAIGON 5649). THIS TELEGRAM SPARKED A BRIEF ADVERSE COMMENT BY A GVN SPOKESMAN AT AN APRIL 5 PRESS CONFERENCE. (SAIGON 5823). LATER IN THE WEEK, THE CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBASSY RECEIVED THROUGH THE MAIL A " COMMUNIQUE" SIGNED BY NEARLY ALL MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION PEOPLE' S SOCIETY BLOC IN THE LOWER HOUSE. IT DENOUNCED BOTH THIEU AND THE NLF AND DEMANDED THAT THE THIRD ELEMENT IN THE NCNRC EMBODY THE VIEWS

OF THE " SILENT MAJORITY" ALLEGEDLY OPPRESSED BY BOTH SIDES. NO MENTION OF THIS DOCUMENT HAS SO FAR APPEARED IN THE PRESS. (SAIGON 6042).

COMMENT: THIS OPPOSITION ACTIVITY APPARENTLY REFLECTS THE VIEWS OF BIG MINH, ALTHOUGH HE PERSONALLY HAS REMAINED APART. THE MOST STRIKING ELEMENT IN BOTH EPISODES IS THEIR FUTILITY IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE. THEY SHOW, HOWEVER, THAT AT LEAST PART OF THIEU' S NON- COMMUNIST OPPOSITION REMAINS UNRECONCILED TO THEIR ERODED STATUS.

D. CAMBODIAN MONK ASSASSINATED IN THE DELTA

ON APRIL 3 U CKNOWN ASSAILANTS KILLED AN INFLUENTIAL ETHNIC CAMBODIAN MONK IN BAC LIEU PROVINCE. WITHIN HOURS, A GROUP OF ETHNIC CAMBODIANS GATHERED AT A VILLAGE OFFICE TO PROTEST THE INCIDENT. A GRENADE WAS THROWN FROM NEAR THE DEMONSTRATORS KILLING AND WOUNDING SOME VILLAGE OFFICIALS AND BYSTANDERS. OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS TOOK PLACE SUBSEQUENTLY, BUT WITHOUT SERIOUS INCIDENT THANKS TO CONCILIATORY GESTURES BY THE PROVINCE CHIEF.

THE GVN CLAIMS THAT THE VC KILLED THE MONK, BUT MOST OF THE LOCAL CAMBODIAN POPULATION ATTRIBUTES THE MURDER TO GVN AGENTS. AN INVESTIGATION HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN PROMISED BY SAIGON AUTHORITIES.

E. SAIGON MEDIA REVIEW

PRESIDENT THIEU' S TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE WAS THE LEADING STORY FOR ALL MEDIA DURING THE PAST WEEK. ALL SAIGON NEWSPAPERS HAVE BEEN GIVING FRONT- PAGE COVERAGE TO THE PRESIDENT' S MISSION. DESPITE THE PRESENCE OF VIETNAMESE NEWSMEN IN THE U. S., THE BULK OF THE COVERAGE HAS CONSISTED OF FOREIGN WIRE SERVICE MATERIAL.

GVN RADIO AND TV HAVE CLOSELY FOLLOWED ALL FACETS OF THE TRIP. THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS SPECIAL REPORTS AND COMMENTARIES FOCUSING ON SUCH THINGS AS THE US- GVN JOINT COMMUNIQUE, FAVORABLE EDITORIAL OPINION IN US NEWSPAPERS, AND THE REACTIONS OF THE SAIGON PRESS. TELEVIEWED SLOGANS DURING THE US PORTION OF THE TRIP
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INCLUDED: " LONG LIVE VIETNAMESE- AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP" AND " HAVING BEEN ALLIES IN WAR, THE RVN AND USA WILL COOPERATE CLOSELY IN PEACE."

COVERAGE OF THE THIEU TRIP HAS SHARED MEDIA ATTENTION WITH THE LATEST INDOCHINA DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDING THE SERIOUS SITUATION IN THE KHMER REPUBLIC, VC/ NVA CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS AT TONG LE CHAN, HONG NGU, AND ELSEWHERE, AND THE SHOOTING DOWN BY THE COMMUNISTS OF ICSS HELICOPTERS. MANY PAPERS

GAVE PROMINENCE TO PRESIDENT THIEU' S REMARKS MADE AT THE
NATIONAL PRESS CLUB ON THE INDOCHINA SITUATION.

THE GENERAL IMPRESSION GIVEN BY VIETNAMESE MEDIA
IS THAT PRESIDENT THIEU' S VISIT TO THE US HAS BEEN A SUCCESS.
EVEN SOME GENERALLY OPPOSITIONIST PAPERS HAVE TERMED THE VISIT
" SUCCESSFUL:." AND HAVE MADE FAVORABLE COMMENTS ON THE DIS-
CUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT NIXON AND THE WASHINGTON SEGMENT OF
PRESIDENT THIEU' S TRIP. (MORE MEDIA DETAILS IN SAIGON 5887.)

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INR-10 IO-12 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 RSR-01

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P R 101015 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9927

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

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WHITE HOUSE

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AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 SAIGON 6048

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A. GVN/ PRG BILATERALS

THE FIFTH SESSION WAS HELD APR 3 AND MADE NO PROGRESS AS THE TWO SIDES FAILED TO AGREE ON AN AGENDA, MAINTAINING RESPECTIVE POSITIONS (SAIGON 5512). THE PRG ALSO TURNED DOWN GVN OFFERS TO HOLD SECRET TALKS AND TO GUARANTEE " NON- ELIMINATION" OF THE PRG IN EXCHANGE FOR NVA WITHDRAWAL. THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR APR 12.

B. PRESIDENT THIEU' S TRAVELS

PRESIDENT THIEU PROCEEDED ON TO EUROPE APR 8 AFTER HIS TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES FOR BRIEF STOPS IN VATICAN CITY ROME 6 BONN AND LONDON, IN ALL OF WHICH HE IS TO CALL ON THE CHIEF OF STATE OR CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT. ACCORDING TO MFA, EXPLOSIVES WERE THROWN INTO THE GROUNDS OF THE GVN EMBASSY IN ROME RECENTLY BUT DID NOT GO OFF.

C. FRANCE AND GVN TO NORMALIZE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAS INFORMED THE GVN THAT IT IS PREPARED TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH SAIGON. THIS MEANS THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL BE REPRESENTED IN EACH OTHERS' CAPITALS BY AMBASSADORS FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1965 WHEN THE GVN FORMALLY SEVERED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH FRANCE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING FRANCE' S LACK OF SUPPORT FOR THE GVN CAUSE AT THE MAY SEATO MINISTERIAL MEETING. THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE MAINTAINED CONSULATES GENERAL IN THE MEANWHILE. SEVERAL GVN EXPRESSIONS OF WILLINGNESS TO RESTORE AMBASSADORIAL RELATIONS IN RECENT YEARS WERE NOT RESPONDED TO BY FRANCE ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WOULD NOT CHANGE THE LEVEL OF ITS REPRESENTATION IN NORTH OR SOUTH VIETNAM WHILE THE PEACE TALKS WERE TAKING PLACE IN PARIS. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) FULL EXPECTS THAT FRANCE WILL PROBABLY ALSO ESTABLISH AMBASSADORIAL RELATIONS WITH HANOI AT THE SAME TIME.

D. GVN CONCERNED OVER POSSIBILITY OF PRG MISSION TO UN

REACTING TO A PRESS REPORT THAT THE PRG HAS APPOINTED A
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REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN, THE GVN HAS REQUESTED THAT
THE US NOT GRANT ANY VISAS TO PRG PERSONNEL PROCEEDING
TO NEW YORK AS ALLEGED PRG UN REPRESENTATIVES. A
MFA SPOKESMAN ALSO PUBLICLY STATED THAT ONLY THE GVN
WAS ENTITLED TO REPRESENT SOUTH VIETNAM AS PERMANENT
OBSERVER TO THE UN.

E. GVN GIVES AGREEMENT TO FIRST ISRAELI AMBASSADOR

A MFA SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED APRIL 4 THAT THE GVN HAS
GIVEN AGREEMENT TO YAIR ARAN AS ISRAEL'S FIRST AMBASSADOR
TO SAIGON.

F. JAPANESE CULTURAL MISSION

A JAPANESE CULTURAL MISSION, HEADED BY A FORMER MINISTER
OF PLANNING AND HEAD OF SONY
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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 INRE-00 AID-20 EB-11 FSI-01 PM-09 INR-10 IO-12

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 RSR-01 DPW-01 PRS-01

OMB-01 SS-15 ADP-00 /114 W
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P R 101015 Z APR 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9928
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
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AMCONSUL CAN THO
CO 7 TH PSYOPS GP OKINAWA
CINCPAC
CINCPACFLT
CINCPACAF
CINCUSARPAC
USARV- AVHGB- O
DEPCHIEF JUSMAAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 SAIGON 6048

CAMBODIA SINCE HIS OUSTER IN 1970. SIHANOUK AND HIS PARTY
WERE REPORTEDLY GREETED AT AN UNSPECIFIED POINT " NEAR" THE
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VIETNAMESE- CAMBODIAN BORDER BY DRV MINISTER OF CULTURE
HOANG MINH GIAM AND OTHER DRV OFFICIALS WHO ESCORTED THE
CAMBODIANS ON THE FLIGHT TO HANOI. (COMMENT: IF, INDEED,
SIHANOUK WAS MET ALONG THE VIETNAMESE- CAMBODIAN BORDER,
IT IS STRANGE NO PRG OFFICIALS WERE INVOLVED. OUR MAPS SHOW
THAT THE DRV AND CAMBODIAN BORDERS ARE SEPARATED BY AT LEAST
160 MILES WHICH, EVEN GIVEN THE COMMUNISTS' PROPENSITY TO
STRETCH THE TRUTH, COULD ONLY WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY BE CHARAC-
TERIZED AS " NEAR." END COMMENT) SIHANOUK WAS GREETED
IN HANOI BY PRIME MINISTER DONG, GENERAL GIAP AND FOREIGN
MINISTER TRINH. ON APR 8 HE RECEIVED PARTY FIRST SECRETARY
LE DUAN AND THE PARTY' S NUMBER- TWO MAN TRUONG CHINH.
DUAN' S CALL IS NOTABLE IN THAT HANOI RARELY PRODUCES ITS TOP
PARTY MAN TO GREET A NON- COMMUNIST. THUS FAR THE ONLY RE-
PORT OF SIHANOUK' S ACTIVITIES IN THE HINTERLANDS HAS BEEN AN AFP
DESPATCH ON APR 8. THIS REPORT, WHICH WAS VINTAGE SIHANOUK,
NOTED THE PRINCE' S REQUEST FOR " DISCRETION" IN REVEALING HIS
ITINERARY BECAUSE HE WOULD MAKE SIMILAR TRIPS IN T C FUTURE.
SIHANOUK BOASTED THAT HE MADE THE TRIP IN REGAL STYLE, TRAVEL-
ING IN RUSSIAN- BUILT JEEPS AND ENJOYING THE SERVICES OF ONE OF
HANOI' S BETTER FRENCH CHEFS. THE PRINCE ALSO CLAIMED
THAT FOLLOWING HIS CONTACTS IN CAMBODIA " THE RESISTANCE
WAS UNITED, " THUS, BY IMPLICATION, GIVING SOME WEIGHT
TO EARLIER REPORTS OF FACTIONALISM IN KI RANKS.

III. ECONOMIC (U)

AB PRICES

FOR THE SECOND WEEK IN A ROW THE SAIGON RETAIL PRICE INDEX SHOWED A DECREASE. FOOD ITEMS WERE DOWN 0.7 PERCENT, NON- FOOD ITEMS 0.3 PERCENT AND THE WHOLE INDEX 0.6 PERCENT. THE INDEX IS NOW 9.8 PERCENT ABOVE THE END OF 1972 (8.8 PERCENT FOR FOOD ITEMS AND 13.1 PERCENT FOR NON- FOOD ITEMS). IT IS 25.5 PERCENT (24.6 PERCENT FOR FGBD AND 2 PERCENT FOR NON- FOOD ITEMS) ABOVE THE 4 WEEK AVERAGE OF A YEAR AGO. SUGAR (67 PERCENT), LEAN PORK (60 PERCENT), PORK BELLIES (83 PERCENT), RICE PRICES (23 PERCENT) AND A FEW PRODUCE ITEMS HAVE BEEN THE MAJOR FACTORS IN THE RISE ON THE FOOD SIDE OF THE INDEX IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS. PETROLEUM PRODUCTS (100 PERCENT), TEXTILES (39 PERCENT), CIGARETTES (38 PERCENT) AND NEWSPAPERS (100 PERCENT) WERE SIGNIFICANT NON-FOOD ITEMS CONTRIBUTING TO THE RISE.

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B. BLACK MARKET CURRENCY AND GOLD RATES

BLACK MARKET CURRENCY RATES CONTINUED TO DECLINE SHARPLY RESPONDING TO A NUMBER OF ACTORS, INCLUDING A CONTINUED TIGHT LIQUIDITY POSITION IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, THE FACT THAT U. S. PERSONNEL IN COUNTRY ARE USING GREEN DOLLARS NOW INSTEAD OF MPC, AND A GENERALLY FAVORABLE REACTION TO NEWS REPORTS OF PRESIDENT THIEU' S VISIT TO THE U. S. AND THE ASSURANCES OF CONTINUED U. S. OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE HE HAS REPORTEDLY RECEIVED FROM WASHINGTON.

THE RATE FOR \$100 GREEN DROPPED FROM 538 ON APRIL 2 TO 508 APRIL 9 AND \$10 GREEN WENT FROM 532 TO 500 IN THE SAME PERIOD. VOLUME OF BLACK MARKET CURRENCY EXCHANGES HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY REDUCED DURING RECENT MONTHS. THE HK\$/ VN\$ CROSS RATE WITH HK\$/ US\$ DROPPED FROM 553 AS OF MARCH 31 TO 539 AS OF APRIL 7. GOLD RATES HOWEVER DECLINED ONLY SLIGHTLY FROM 45,900 VN\$ PER TADI A WEEK AGO TO 45,500 ON APRIL 10.

WHITEHOUSE

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